

REMARKS

The Examiner noted that the present application contains claims directed to two patentably distinct species of the claimed invention, i.e., the embodiment of Fig. 2 and the embodiment of Fig. 3. The Examiner has required the Applicants to “elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable,” and the Examiner has also noted that “[c]urrently, no claims appear to be generic.”

In response, Applicants have amended claim 25 to be the generic claim, i.e., claim 25 encompasses the species represented in Figs. 2 and 3. Furthermore, Applicants have canceled claims 26 and 30-36, which claims were directed to the species represented in Fig. 3. Applicants respectfully submit that generic claim 25 and its dependent claims 16-20, 22-24 and 27-29 are in allowable condition.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present amendments to claim 25 and cancellation of claims 26 and 30-36 obviate the election/restriction requirement.

For the sake of completeness of response to the election/restriction requirement, Applicants note the following regarding the claims 16-20 and 22-36 as they stood prior to the amendments presented in this paper: a) claims 16-20, 22-25 and 27-29 are readable on the embodiment represented in Fig. 2 (Species “A” identified in the present restriction/election requirement); and b) claims 26 and 30-36 are readable on the embodiment represented in Fig. 3 (Species “A” identified in the present restriction/election requirement). Should the present amendments be deemed not responsive to the election/restriction requirement issued by the Examiner (although there is no valid reason why the present amendments should not be entered), Applicants elect Species A (claims 16-20, 22-25 and 27-29 as they stood prior to the amendments presented in this paper) for further prosecution on the merits.

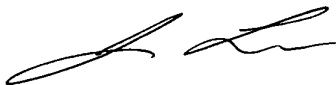
CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims 16-20, 22-25 and 27-29 are in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

KENYON & KENYON

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 (R. No. 36,197)
By: JONG LEE for Richard Mayer
Richard L. Mayer
Reg. No. 22,490
One Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(212) 425-7200

CUSTOMER NO. 26646